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YEAR IN REVIEW: METRO
RECOUNTS THE BEST AND
WORST MOVIES OF 2013

PAGE 24



Roughriders, GSP, end of NHL lockout ...

... are among the top sports
stories of 2013

PAGE 49

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Local

As the year comes to a close, here are some of the special stories that filled our hearts and minds in 2013.

Even in the line of duty, dogs remain man's best friend

Remembering Quanto.

Reporter learns constables and canines share a special bond



LEAH GERMAIN
Metro reporter

Adam Segin is at a crossroads.

As a constable with the Edmonton police canine unit, Segin and his partner Storm have worked as a team for almost seven years — a year shy of retirement.

Unlike other jobs, retirement for a handler and police dog is a definite.

I first met Segin and his jet-black German shepherd while I was researching a followup article on Quanto, an Edmonton police dog killed on duty in 2013.

I was inspired by Quanto's story and the partnership between handler and



Edmonton Police Service dog Quanto died after being stabbed on Oct. 7 during an attempted arrest. THE CANADIAN PRESS

service dog. It was a special bond — one that can only be formed with a creature that loves unconditionally.

For Segin, it's a bond he's been developing since Storm was seven weeks old.

A bond he not only bets his job on, but his life. And as their bond grows stronger Storm grows older.

"That's the hardest part for me right now," Segin said. "He is eight years old

and the last year has been kind of challenging.

"(The job) is so much wear and tear on their joints, hips, knees and back."

Segin's boss, Staff Sgt.

Troy Carriere, said members of the canine unit have spent a good chunk of their career training to be a handler, which can make it especially hard for them to leave and retire their dog.

"The really difficult part is when you drive away for the first time and go to your new job," Carriere said, remembering his own experience. "Your partner is really a part of you and you are leaving him or her at home."

As a supervisor to Segin and Const. Matt Williamson, Quanto's handler, Carriere said whether a dog retires or is killed, handlers have to grieve.

"What happened to Matt was terrible," Carriere said. "But in some ways it's easier than having to go to (the vet) and put your friend down."

MP Costas Menegakis has sponsored a private member's bill, called Quanto's Law to legislate protections for animals that serve with police.

Readers' online picks

You let us know — via our Metropolitan Panel — which online stories affected you.

Proudest

From abandoned building to paint ball paradise

This year two entrepreneurs transformed an 85,000-square-foot abandoned office building in downtown Edmonton into Canada's largest indoor paintball facility. Rob Davy and Brittany Anderson signed a lease on the decades-old building located on 107A Avenue and 100 Street and after renovations are now open for business. **METRO**

Edmonton gets a brand new arena

A fully-funded arena deal was finally approved this spring. Then-mayor Stephen Mandel applauded the Katz Group and city council for finally resolving a long running issue. "We will have a new arena with the Oilers, which is one of the most valuable assets in this city, staying in the city for the next 35 years," he said. **METRO**

1 NEWS

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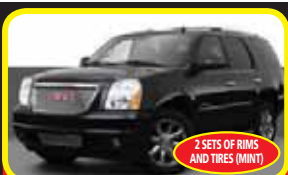
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A snowstorm to remember



Images of the highway impact of last spring's snowstorm, March 2013. STEPHANIE DUBOIS/METRO

Massive spring snowstorm.

Witnessing highway pileup south of Leduc caused by storm was unforgettable



STEPHANIE DUBOIS
Metro reporter

A mother and her son holding hands while pulling luggage past the countless parked cars on QE II south were barely visible through the snowstorm, as my car crawled along in traffic flowing the opposite direction on March 21.

It was a snowstorm that would leave hundreds injured and trapped on the highway as a result of a pile-up just south of Leduc.

Portions of the highway were shut down until the next day as emergency crews worked with the approximately 100 injured people.

As a reporter for the Leduc Rep newspaper at the time, I was able to witness first-hand how the storm affected the area, with many of the emergency service crews in the region asked to lend a helping hand.

The City of Leduc sent four paramedics in two ambulances but they were limited as to sending further resources as the city's fire department was battling a condo fire and dealing with several local accidents.

Seeing everyone in action in a crisis like this was reassuring.

However, there were obvious cracks in the lines of communication.

Aftermath

City of Leduc fire chief Ernie Polsom said subsequent to the crash, surrounding municipalities were debriefed and agreed more communication was needed.

- **Practice.** "The one thing we all committed to doing was phoning the provincial government's Emergency Management Agency because they really are the coordination group and they can make sure we're all aware of what's going on in the inter-municipal perspective," he said, adding the city will be hosting a large regional exercise this spring.

Decisions

Lines of communication were re-confirmed provincially following the storm, according to Alberta Transportation officials, after Edmonton Police tried to shut down parts of the Anthony Henday Drive during the massive snowstorm.

- **Closures.** "Official road closures can only be done by the minister of transportation or his/her designates. It was just providing clarity around those services," said Nancy Beasley Hosker, spokesperson for Alberta Transportation.

More readers' online picks

Frothiest

Parents save school music program

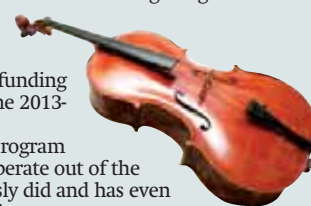
After a summer of hard work, Parent volunteers saved the string portion of a decades-old public school extra-curricular music program that was silenced because of budget cuts in the spring.

The Music Enrichment Program, which was founded and administered by the Edmonton Public School Board, provided affordable after-school stringed music and orchestral lessons to children ages eight to 18.

In May, Metro was first to report that the school board would stop funding the program for the 2013-2014 school year.

However, the program is continuing to operate out of the schools it previously did and has even expanded to St. Albert.

The Edmonton String Players Association, with the support of community grants and volunteers, now covers the cost of running the string program. **METRO**



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Civic election. Iveson's conversation with voters wins him keys to the city



RYAN
TUMILTY
Metro reporter

About \$100 in mileage claims, 11 total forums, 79 candidates, countless phone calls and emails, a few dozen very late nights, one deadline blown and \$70 in winnings from our election pool ... that's how the numbers broke down for me covering Edmonton's 2013 civic election.

But the numbers don't come close to telling the whole story of what for me was the most memorable story of 2013.

As Metro's city hall reporter, I knew the election was going to be a big part of my work in 2013, but I had no idea just how much it was going to take over my life.

The race to replace Mayor Stephen Mandel was always going to be a major event. Mandel's nine years as the city's mayor and the strong relationship he built with council meant the city had moved in the direction he wanted it to move in and the lure of taking over the wheel was going to be strong.

My colleagues and I at Metro started working out a strategy in the spring to cover this race. The idea was simple: give voters the information they need to feel comfortable marking a ballot.

For me, that meant mak-

ing sure all voters — from the political junkie to the political newbie — had what they needed. I wanted people to know what the mayoral candidates thought about LRT or potholes or taxes, but I also wanted them to know about their favourite spots in the city or what they thought about each other.

Late in the election my typical day began with a few emails before I was out the door (including a few before I was even dressed) and it ended around 10 p.m. when I filed from the location of that night's ward forum.

Conversation
People wanted a conversation about where Edmonton was going and a lot of people felt the city hadn't been listening.

At those forums, I noticed a familiar theme. People wanted a conversation about where Edmonton was going and a lot of people felt the city hadn't been listening.

Despite the landslide on election night, Don Iveson's victory was not, in my opinion, a lock until well into the campaign. And I think ultimately it was the conversation his campaign had with Edmontonians, the conversation they clearly wanted, that pushed him into victory.

The campaign was exhausting and tipped my work-life balance very firmly one way, but it was great to be able to hear this city and what it wants, and I would do it again tomorrow if asked.

Plus, I ended up \$70 richer.



Don Iveson celebrates after winning the election in October. METRO FILE

Bottle cap story goes viral but takes toll on the family



CANDICE WARD/FOR METRO

Offensive blunder

Vitamin Water commits big business gaffe

CANDICE
WARD
Metro freelancer

While Blake Loates — who discovered the now-infamous “You Retard” bottle cap on the top of a bottle of Vitamin Water (a Coca-Cola product) back in September in Edmonton — has been satisfied with the outcome

of the ordeal and has moved on, the story still seems to be making headlines as one of the worst Canadian business blunders of 2013.

As a journalist it was exciting to see a story I helped to uncover go viral and facilitate positive change within a major corporation, but it was also difficult to watch the toll the story was taking on the family.

Like Loates, I was unprepared for the story to go international so quickly, with major news outlets from around the world picking it up. When stories like this one become viral,

people tend to take to the web with their opinions — some of support for the cause, and others not so supportive.

Loates was never out for media attention (as I had approached her for the story), 15 minutes of fame or financial gain. She merely sought awareness to the pain the word could cause — even if it was intended to be in its French context.

To me, she was a hero for standing up for something she believed was wrong, and having the courage to stand by it, despite the criticism she was receiving.

Quick with apologies

\$100K

Coca-Cola was quick to apologize for the unlucky marketing mistake. It cancelled the promotion and even went above and beyond by donating \$100,000 to charity.

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More reader's online choices — what made you sad

Graphic images brought GuZoo under fire again

Animal rights activists demanded the Alberta government reopen its investigation into the controversial roadside GuZoo after new footage and photos sur-

faced in early July depicting what it claimed were poor living standards and safety hazards for exotic animals housed on site.

The nearly 10-minute video showed what appeared to be filth in birdcages and fridges, maggots in a bowl of food set next to a baby lynx and

other domestic cats, and at least four animal carcasses outdoors among other garbage.

The Council of Concerned Albertans for Animal Welfare and Public Safety said it was sent the photos — 200 of them in total — and video from a whistleblower. **METRO**

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ALL 3 PIECES

#omg! Readers all a-Twitter over TEMP

Canadian author Douglas Coupland, best-known for his groundbreaking novel *Generation X*, visited Metro's head office just before the launch of *TEMP*. The 20-part fiction series was published in Metro throughout November. Here's how Metro readers responded on Twitter:

@jason_michael: A sincere heartfelt Thank You to @DouglasCoupland for *TEMP*. I am a temp working for the government and your words continue to inspire!

@Teyemtenot: yet another reason why Metro is my favourite thing to read in the morning!

@hurricanedia: thanks for keeping me entertained for 20 a.m. commutes. Funny, surprisingly thought-provoking and relevant.

@KaT4_2012: read *TEMP* every day! #youguysnailedit #precariousworkiseverywhere Douglas Coupland is brilliant

@morgancadenhead: The collaboration between @DouglasCoupland and @MetroNewsCanada is fascinating. A truly unique way to approach fiction.

@SuzanneMaryse: i am loving this! ... Coupland nails the post-modern condition once again

@ctmwyn: The best part about @DouglasCoupland #Temp is the high concentration of #CliffHangers #Serialization

METRO



Web editor Hannah Zitner chats with Douglas Coupland during the author's visit to Metro's head office in Toronto on Oct. 28. DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

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Digital

Metro's digital team takes a look back at 2013 and shares some of their most memorable stories.



Flowers sit on the Dublin grave of Lt. Thomas Leslie Bourke following a request from his great nephew on the other side of the world. ELMOSLATS/IMGUR

Restoring faith in humanity

Warm and fuzzies.

Stories of kindness aren't as rare as we might think



ANDREW FIFIED
Metro web editor

Internet chatter is often maligned as a squalid cesspool of anonymous viciousness.

The maligners are correct. We see what you write. You monsters.

The maligners are also wrong. The web is populated by millions, and the loudest voices aren't always the most accurate representation.

According to a traffic study of the New York Times website, readers are much more likely to share and comment

on stories thick with warm and fuzzies.

This year, our experience with a Halifax man and a trans-Atlantic solid, done anonymously, fits snugly among those findings.

Last March, Andrew Bourke took to Reddit (speaking of maligned) with a moonshot request: For somebody who lives in Dublin to swill a St. Patrick's Day pint at the grave of his great uncle, who died more than 50 years before Bourke was born.

A short time later, a user named elmoslats replied with a simple "It was a bitch to find. Bought some flowers," linking to photos of the grave, newly festooned with flowers.

Below that reply came a cascade of kudos, plaudits, attaboys and robust reconstructions of a previously shattered

faith in humanity.

For his part, a delighted Bourke told us, "I honestly cried." His offers of reward were spurned by elmoslats, who preferred to stay anonymous.

Despite comments we received from people revelling in a rare story of kindness, they aren't that rare. Amid the rancour of online discourse, most of us are simply cracking jokes, swapping hobbies and sharing experiences.

Sure, the rancour can be disheartening. But it's also critical to the experience — especially when it summons people happy to fight back.

So, perhaps instead of clutching to a seemingly slippery faith in humanity that wavers based on Twitter's daily mood, everybody should just keep up the good work in 2014.

We've done OK so far.

A life-changing story

Stranger than fiction



TAKARA SMALL
Metro web editor

Approximately 10 months ago my life changed.

A small, and what I imagined to be unimportant, story about the weathered Bible on my grandmother's nightstand brought me back in touch with a family member I had long assumed would be lost forever.

The book was and still is a treasured item. My grandmother cherished it during her early years in Canada. More importantly, however, it's a testament to the life she built in this country.

I was asked to write a story about my grandmother's Bible for a feature during Black History Month. I never thought an off-the-cuff story about a Bible my grandmother held onto as a young woman would connect me with a long lost relative from my childhood.

I had lost contact with my aunt on my father's side of the family after my parents separated and I moved away from my childhood neighbourhood. The story (and picture) that appeared in the newspaper caught the eye of my aunt during her morning reading, who later contacted Torstar News Service.

Three weeks after the story ran in the paper I met her and my little cousin at my apartment — two blocks away from where she lives.

Couch to 42K. How a fairweather runner became a marathoner



HANNAH ZITNER
Metro web editor

While I've always been a fairweather runner, I never wanted to run a marathon. Running 42.2 km just seemed like too much running. But when managing editor Fernando Carneiro came around shouting, like a newsy selling papers, "Who wants to run a marathon?" something changed. Maybe it was the competitive teenager in me coming out, or maybe I just felt bad for the over-ambitious guy, but I agreed.

And the Couch to 42K blog was born.

For the next 18 weeks, we ran, we wrote and we even made a few (un-publishable) videos. The blog gave us all (four in total) something to think about while we sweated through those 50 to 70 kilometres per week.

Batman

Throughout the 18 weeks of training, I had the honour of running with Dark Knight Runner, aka JP Hernandez — a dedicated athlete who ran the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon dressed as Batman to raise money for Sick Kids hospital.

Being the best at exercise

Co-runner/writer Liz Brown caused a wee stir after writing a blog post saying runners were just "trying to be the best at exercise" because "anyone can do it." People (well, running people) weren't happy.

Chest conferences

The most popular post on the blog turned out to be the one about my chest. It turns out that's what happens when you put boobs in a headline. After reaching out to ladies for bra suggestions, I began regularly receiving emails (and being accosted in the office washroom) from chesty ladies about how to control their bits.

Swag

Since we were writing about all things running (nutrition included), we started getting a light stream of (mostly terrible) health food sent to the office. The Simply Bar was among the worst. The case of electrolyte water was perhaps the best (only because the size is purse-perfect).



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The lighter side of the law. A dash of humour helps humanize VicPD



LUKE
SIMCOE
Metro digital reporter

On the Metro digital desk, we're well aware that funny stories are more likely to be shared by our online readers; it's an insight we share with the Victoria Police Department.

Last year, when a naive Reddit user posted about buying marijuana at the University of Victoria, VicPD Const. Mike Russell was there.

Using the "VicPDCanada" handle, Russell announced himself with a simple "cough," reminding users that the long arm of the law extends online.

Since then, he and his partner Bowen Osoko have been working to build the force's social media cred.

And despite the serious nature of police work, the pair hasn't shied away from the absurdist humour endemic to Internet culture.

When cops busted drug

Cats with hats

"Being silly sometimes helps humanize our officers and make them more approachable. It's also just a lot of fun."

Bowen Osoko, Victoria Police Department



The Victoria Police Department has spammed Twitter followers with pictures of cats wearing hats, among other humorous tactics.
COURTESY VICPD

dealers hiding cocaine in fake "Durasell" batteries in January, Russell penned a hilarious press release and offered tips to others looking to secure their stash.

"Don't forget to label it 'not drugs' so we don't inadvertently look inside," he said.

When handed the reins of the force's Twitter account in March, Osoko opted to spam followers with pictures of cats wearing hats.

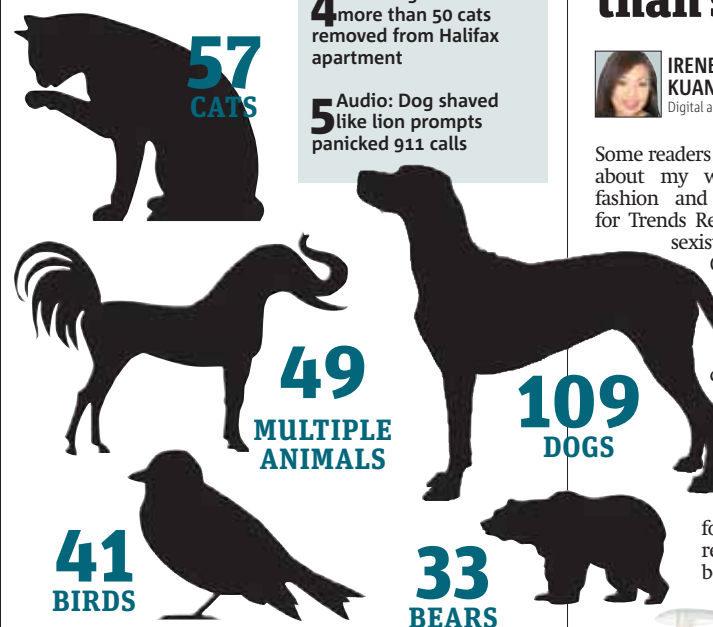
"Being silly sometimes helps humanize our officers and make them more approachable. It's also just a lot of fun."

Which animal is top dog?



COLIN
MCNEIL
Metro web editor

Animals. They're cute, they're cuddly, and they have a furry iron grip on the Internet. From the continuing antics of the Ikea monkey to the Toronto Zoo's pandas, it's been quite a year for Canadian fauna, but which four-legged friend is top dog at metronews.ca? The answer may give you paws for thought. There have been 539 stories on metronews.ca tagged "animals" in 2013. Here are the top 5 animals (by number of stories).



Top stories by views

1 Photos: Regina squirrels tangled by sticky situation

2 Warning: Graphic new images surface of GuZoo animal farm

3 Video: Elephant seal inhales meal in blink of an eye

4 Hoarding case sees more than 50 cats removed from Halifax apartment

5 Audio: Dog shaved like lion prompts panicked 911 calls



Irene Kuan's "sparrow face" selfies. CONTRIBUTED

Glymm. There's more to being a beauty editor than sparrow-face selfies



IRENE
KUAN
Digital associate managing editor

Some readers have complained about my work as Metro's fashion and beauty blogger for Trends Report, labelling it sexist and shallow.

Granted, writing about "sparrow face selfies" and "bitchy resting face" doesn't suggest hard journalism, but the beauty industry is what it is.

In fact, if it hadn't been for an assignment reviewing beauty boxes, I would have never stumbled

upon this story: One reader claimed she had been scammed by a subscription beauty box service called Glymm. The company charged her for a yearly subscription and then sent an abrupt email about their closure. It shuttered its business, website, Facebook and Twitter accounts, while keeping customers' money.

As a blogger, I care about my readers and their feedback.

I tracked the founder of Glymm using LinkedIn and badgered his secretary for information over the phone. I also used my ties as a beauty blogger to get reaction from other beauty-box businesses. After all, there were tons of irked Glymm subscribers in an industry that is still working to establish itself.

The week of April 25 the Glymm story generated more than 10,000 website views and 20,000-plus views on my Storyfy. It even prompted a company, Nail Polish Canada, to link to my story and provide free gifts to customers bilked by Glymm.

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National

Rob Ford, Senate scandal, Toilet Squirrel: 2013 was a big year. Here are the stories that inspired us, made us laugh or impacted our lives in other ways.

Readers' online selections

Sex parties? 'Pork-chop' bullying? What is this, you ask? Well, it's what you told us — via our Metropolitan Panel — were your favourite Metro online national news stories of the year



UFO sightings double in Canada

Ufology Research issued its Canadian UFO survey in May and the stats revealed reported sightings doubled in 2012. "Polls have shown that one in 10 Canadians believe they have seen a UFO. That's three to four million people with UFO experiences," said Chris Rutkowski of Ufology. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**



T.O. man's call for stem-cell donations

In July, Chris Taylor of Toronto called on healthy 17- to 35-year-olds to become stem-cell donors. "I need one, it turns out, to save my life," he told Metro. "More importantly, it's for everyone who needs one." OneMatch is a program run by Canadian Blood Services which matches potential stem-cell donors to unrelated patients. **METRO**



Canadian bullying video goes viral

Shane Koyczan hit a nerve in the public psyche in February with his video on bullying. In two days, more than one million people watched the seven-minute video. The poem, with a tumbling series of animated sketches, chronicles the name-calling and humiliation Koyczan and other kids in school endured. It opens: "When I was a kid, I used to think that pork chops and karate chops were the same thing." **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**



New rules for Canuck drivers

In early 2012, this came in from the department of red tape you didn't know existed: Canadians were required by law to have an international driving permit in addition to their regular licences when driving in Florida. The new law applied to any non-resident, but has since been unanimously repealed by legislators. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Readers' + Metro's choice

Teen-trafficking case lacked outrage



JESSICA SMITH CROSS
Metro reporter

Three girls ran away from a group home last year, lured away by a prostitution ring and put to work in Toronto.

The girls were in the care of the province when they were trafficked. When the story broke, strangely, there was no public outrage.

I called up critics of both opposition parties and neither knew much. The Ministry of Child and Youth Services simply said after the criminal trial that safety would be "enhanced." I talked to a woman who was prostituted from her group home at age 12 and is now calling on the provincial government to acquire "a deep understanding" of how the sex trade involves girls in the child welfare system. I agree.

I'd also like to see that it will never happen again.

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HARRY ROSEN

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Metro story helps man secure himself a new home



KATE
WEBB
Metro reporter

'Hundred times better'

When asked to update a story that impacted me over the last year, I immediately thought of Stephen Chalmers. I interviewed him again last month.

The walkway up to his new trailer sparkles with red and blue Christmas lights, and on clear nights moonlight spills through tall pine trees onto the quiet campground where he has lived for nearly two months now.

The 54-year-old is still getting used to his new surroundings after moving out of a dilapidated trailer at the run-down Beladean Trailer Park in Surrey, B.C., which lost power in September due to an improperly supervised motel demolition.

"I'm 100 times better. I feel better, I sleep better," says Chalmers, who suffers from multiple mental illnesses and lives on a meagre disability income.

New digs, old issues

After Metro ran stories on the outage, and the fact that he couldn't find a new park willing to take his old, leaky trailer, an online campaign raised enough to buy him a newer, 1999 fifth-wheel.

But the complex problems of a man who has overcome crack addiction and alcoholism and still struggles daily with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder cannot be neatly resolved with four walls of aluminum and vinyl.

Some days he feels up, some days he feels down, he says.

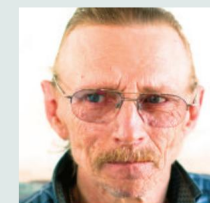
The weather, getting used to his new neighbours, and the stress of living low-income — all of these have an effect on his moods.

But Chalmers says he seeks help when he needs it, from the mental-health care system, from friends, and from a local food bank.



JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO IN VANCOUVER

Moving on up



"I feel more positive about myself," Chalmers tells Metro. "I'm more sure of myself. I feel more personable towards myself... I think of myself as someone who actually deserves to be respected, which — that's kind of foreign territory to me."

Stephen Chalmers, who says he is proud that by sharing his story publicly he has become someone people approach for advice about how to seek help.

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Chris Hadfield. Starman blows our minds



HENRIETTA
WALMARK
Metro copy editor

Commander's log — stardate: 04-12-2013: "Here am I floating in my tin can/ A last glimpse of the world/ Planet Earth is blue and there's nothing left to do."

Few events in 2013 eclipsed Chris Hadfield's cover of David Bowie's Space Oddity. The music video of the astronaut literally floating in his "tin can" as he sang his farewell to life aboard

the International Space Station capped an extraordinary mission of firsts.

From his arrival on the ISS in December 2012, through taking over command of Expedition 35 in March, and beyond his re-entry mid-May, Hadfield wowed the world.

As the ISS orbited Earth, he tweeted stunning photos of the planet, chatted with William Shatner, a.k.a. Captain Kirk, shared videos of zero-gravity science experiments, did Q&A's with kids

via satellite-links in school auditoriums and performed an interspace duet with Ed Robertson.

He was having the time of his life, knew it, and took us along for the ride.

But what's really cool is what's been left trailing in the stardust.

Hadfield allowed me and millions of others to experience Earth and the universe as never before, sparking our imagination and reigniting interest in the final frontier as a space worth exploring.



Chris Hadfield got us excited about space again. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Sheer madness. Lululemon is stretching its customers' patience



MELISSA
DUNNE
Metro copy editor

Bent over, hands touching toes, I swivelled to get a good look in the changing-room mirror.

This is not the kind of bending and stretching I usually do in my \$98 Lululemon pants.

The Luxtreme tights (not part of the recall last March) were almost as thin as pantyhose, my underwear clearly visible.

The clothing behemoth had cattily suggested the sheeriness was caused by women squeezing their fat butts into too-small pants. So I went up a size, then another size. The bottoms were now loose and baggy ... and still

see-through.

I told a store "educator" about this, only to be snottily informed that "It's the nature of the fabric."

It seems it's in the nature of the athletic-clothing empire to stretch its customers' patience. From the top on down, the response to the sheer-pants recall has been sheer madness.

Acting like a snobby, reed-thin, peroxide-blond yogi has been a core part of Lululemon's practice for too long.

It's time for the new leadership to be the one twisting and bending for its devoted customer base. If not, this Lulu addict will have to find a store that accepts a woman with (gasp) thighs that sometimes rub together.



An instructor, centre, conducts a yoga class while dressed in Lululemon clothes. JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES FILE

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Trudging through floodwater



ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO IN CALGARY

Thigh-deep water

Snapping an iconic image of the Calgary floods



ROBSON
FLETCHER
Metro reporter

Standing at a downtown street corner, thigh-deep in brown water, I snapped one of my favourite photos of the Calgary flood.

A man was walking east along 9 Avenue, passing beneath a powerless streetlight at 4 Street SE,

with the underpass behind him almost unrecognizable as it was filled to its ceiling with floodwater. He was carrying a backpack and looking down as he trudged through the road-turned-river, with the flood-ravaged Saddledome in the background behind him.

The image, to me, summed up just how far Calgary's rivers had encroached into the heart of the city.

Then I realized I had better get the heck out of there.

Seeking higher ground

An eerily quiet downtown

The penny dropped when another downtown wader came up from behind me to show me his own photo, one he had taken on his iPhone just a couple hours earlier, in the same spot. It showed the same underpass, with nearly two metres less water in it.

"It's filling up fast," he said.

I had heard on the radio that the river levels had begun receding by this point, but I quickly realized water was still making its way to

the low-lying East Village area, and the once thigh-deep water was now making its way to my waist.

So I made my way west, to higher ground, and continued exploring an eerily quiet downtown.

No power. No cars. No one out on the streets.

Usually bustling at this time of the day, the core of the city was nearly completely deserted by Friday afternoon, June 21. It was a testament to the power of the rivers, but also to the orderly evacuation plan that was executed on such short notice.

It's a memory I'll keep for life.

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International

From strange to serious — the world was a fascinating and sometimes heartbreaking place in 2013.

An eagle's eye for trends

LACY
ATALICK
Metro copy editor

Celebrating selfies

Two weeks after the Oxford Dictionary declared “selfie” to be the word of the year, an Australian eagle with a flair for the topical put the icing on the proverbial cake by stealing a video camera, recording its 110-kilometre journey and, oh yeah, snapping a selfie along the way. As the selfie has become ubiquitous, app developers have capitalized — principally by offering photo-editing technology to capture a best look — while bloggers have borne witness to the form’s avant garde (hint: the duck face, the sparrow and the “squinch”). But as far as I’m concerned, the eagle’s is so far the best, most transcendent, least-filtered selfie. Its beak seems to poke the camera’s lens, to pierce the scrim between parody and coincidence, and I can’t help but laugh at what we’ve become.

‘The People’s Pope.’ Will Francis be a paragon of progressive papacy?

MIKE
PALMA
Metro copy editor

Not long after Pope Benedict XVI became the first Holy Father in centuries to quit his job, his successor, Francis, has captured headlines and hearts with his progressive approach to the papacy. I grew up Catholic, and his humility, his focus on the poor, and his expressed tolerance of gays and non-believers has landed him in my good books as well.

But is Francis really a progressive symbol of an evolving church? Time hailed him as “The People’s Pope” in its Person of the Year cover story and suggested he’s “poised to transform” the Vatican. He’s unquestionably been great PR compared to the previous pope, who struck me as being harsher and more conservative than John Paul II before him. But how much power does Francis actually have to change things for good?



Pope Francis. FRANCO ORIGLIA/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Even if Francis makes the poor and downtrodden the focus of his entire papal career, his church remains strictly against homosexuality, divorce,

contraception and abortion. Unless he’s willing and able to change the official rules, I’m not sure I’ll continue to find him so delightful.



Royally inundated

CAROL
CHUNG
Metro copy editor

The arrival of Prince George of Cambridge was the most anticipated birth in the history of modern media. At least, that’s the assumption you

could make when looking back at the relentless press coverage of the royal pregnancy. Some readers were likely sick of hearing about Will and Kate’s spawn long before he popped out of the womb, but that heady mix of wealth, privilege and youth is catnip for the masses, journalists included. If there’s one thing we can take away from the baby bombardment it’s that the British monarchy is in no danger of being dethroned, not with the press at its side.

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Readers' online
selections

Nothing hard-hitting here: Metro online readers gravitated towards a giant toilet clog and a lion-like dog on the loose as their favourite international stories of 2013, as picked through our Metropolitan Panel

Having same name apparently not the secret to a successful marriage



It took a simple Facebook message from one Kelly Hildebrandt to another Kelly Hildebrandt to get the wheels of love turning. But it seems the two are no longer Facebook friends. The young couple filed for divorce in July. "How do they term it at the courthouse? Irreconcilable differences, that is what I would say," the male Hildebrandt told a newstation. "We gave it our best shot." **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**



'Fatberg' discovered in suburban sewer

Sure, it may have looked like an iceberg, but there was nothing cool about it. Utility company Thames Water said in August it has discovered what it calls the biggest "fatberg" ever recorded in Britain — a 15-ton blob of congealed fat and baby wipes lodged in a sewer drain. That's enough "wrongly flushed festering food fat mixed with wet wipes" to fill a double-decker bus such as the famous London Routemaster, the company said. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**



Dog shaved like lion prompts 911 call

A dog that has been shaved to look like a lion set off a panic in Norfolk, Va. in January. Three 911 calls came in on the same day reporting a lion wandering the streets. It's "roaming loose in the neighbourhood a few blocks from the zoo," one caller reported to the 911 dispatcher at 10:19 a.m. After the 911 calls, Norfolk police called the Virginia Zoo to make sure its lions were all accounted for. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**



MSN messenger goes the way of ICQ

Microsoft's venerable Messenger program was moved to the great big recycling bin in the sky this year. Users had until March 15 to migrate their accounts over to Skype, which the software company acquired in 2011. At its peak, Messenger boasted 300 million users in more than 60 countries. Microsoft will continue Messenger in China, due to the peculiar nature of the Chinese Market. **METRO**

Search for Germany's giant golden cookie



Found missing at the beginning of this year: One golden cookie, weighing around 20 kg. The rectangular gilded bronze sculpture was part of a statue gracing the facade of German cookie baker Bahlsen's Hannover office. A police statement said a newspaper received a picture showing someone in an outfit similar to Sesame Street's Cookie Monster holding a golden cookie. The sender wrote to demand cookies be delivered to children at a city hospital. Police were not sure at the time if it was the same cookie, or a real claim of responsibility. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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Egypt

'An uncertain reality'



DEENA
DOUARA
Metro copy editor

Calls to relatives in Egypt are reminders that while the deteriorating state of affairs — of people's spirits and dreams and savings — is frustrating to behold from here, it's an uncertain reality, a nightmare, over there.

I was there this summer, in the lead-up to the anniversary of then-president Mohamed Morsi's inauguration. I tried to understand the arguments: why Egyptians must protest; call for legal processes; stay home and give him a fair chance.

I tried to capture that atmosphere for Metro, on TV and for Huffington Post, all garnering strong reactions. As protests intensified, so did people's rhetoric. A prevalent "You're with us or with the terrorists" approach took root, serving to justify military crackdowns and delegitimizing nuanced opinions that didn't conform neatly to pro-military or pro-Muslim Brotherhood.



An Egyptian woman reacts in Tahrir Square the day after former Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi, the country's first democratically elected president, was ousted from power on July 4, 2013 in Cairo.

ED GILES/GETTY IMAGES FILE

The 2011 revolution was one of the most dramatic scenes Egyptians witnessed in at least three decades. There was uncertainty and disagreement and plenty of anger. I believe 2013 really changed Egyptians. Mistrust, contempt, revenge, hatred: these sentiments

are relatively new, and they are frightening.

As repression, imprisonment and censorship have seemingly increased alongside an ever-declining economy, Egyptians now must too fear their neighbours. And divided, they say, is how they fall.

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Voices

This is rare. Three Metro columnists are asked to write about their most memorable work this year. Turns out it can't be done without your feedback.

MY ONE LONG YEAR



JUST SAYIN'
Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

est of times, right?

That makes for lots of material, such as:

Multi-billionaire Amazon's Jeff Bezos was in the news this year for buying the fabled Washington Post of Woodward and Bernstein fame for the equivalent of billionaire pocket lint: \$250 million.

That's less, by the way, than what the Qatar Royal family paid for Impressionist painter Paul Cézanne's *The Card Players* — \$259 million. (Big deal. I paid \$2.59 for *The Card Players* at the neighbourhood garage sale. I really love the look on the bulldog's face.)

Then there are those columns that are memorable for some really great bits, such as the one about the one-way expedition to Mars that was signing up potential colonists earlier this year:

"Therefore Mars One is looking for a special kind of person. Someone who is nuts enough to spend the rest of his or her life stuck in a climate-controlled hut the size of a portable toilet but well adjusted enough not to try to eat his or her fellow castaways."

What writing!

Of course, you can't write a column these days without having your own online anvil chorus, and I managed to hit a sour note writing about people who don't wear enough clothes on the beach. My protest went along aesthetic lines, not skin care, and the mob that formed outside my virtual door was not happy.

Here's just a taste: "Holy crap this is arguably the most ignorant thing I've ever read in my life."

You can't please all of the people all of the time, but if you try really hard, you can annoy all of the people all of the time.

Fortunately, I did manage to get an online standing O for a column I wrote about a movement to ban tipping that's just getting off the ground in New York and Chicago. One reader, named

Reader writes

"After reading your brief article I had to say, very well written, entertaining, all the while thought-provoking." Crystal

Even though asking me to choose a favourite column is like asking me to proclaim a public preference for my goldfish over my hamster, I have dutifully reviewed *Just Sayin'* for the past year, and it turns out I have a lot to say, which might surprise a few people.

But I've managed to narrow it down.

Generally, I try to communicate my total bemusement with contemporary life. It's the best of times. It's the worst of times. It's the weird-

2013 is over and I'm left holding the (mail)bag



HE SAYS
John Mazerolle
readers@metronews.ca

I've been told to pick one favourite 2013 column and reminisce, but my columns are like my children and once they're out in the world I will deny they are mine.

Instead, let's open the mailbag. After a year of columnistic genius I feel it's important for readers to provide a fresh perspective on how wonderful I am. For instance, one fan recently sent me a Facebook message that said my

Mail moment

"Stupid yellow journalism at it's finest!!!" Online Fan



ISTOCK IMAGES

columns are "desperately TRYING to be funny. Alas, they just come off juvenile." To hear my work is desperately funny, yet childlike, is wonderful. I clicked on her page to thank her and learned she's graduated from "I didn't finish (2008)," which signals a level of brash independence and attention to detail I think we can all emulate. Under professional skills it said, "crack-smoking," which means she

will soon be a writer (if she's joking) or the mayor of a large city (if she's not).

Another reader let me know my column is "pure dribble." I briefly assumed it was an insult and he had misspelled 'drive.' Then I realized it was a basketball-related compliment, and that he considers me the Michael Jordan of Metro columnists. Pure, unadulterated dribble. Swish.

Some other actual mail-

bag highlights: "Hypocrit much?" (More than you. I add an 'e.') "Do your research." (No.) "Stupid yellow journalism at it's finest!!!" (There are numerous problems here, but they are amply overcome by the use of three exclamation points. Bravo.) And that's the 2013 mailbag. See you next year, readers — older, but not wiser!!!

I swear, and I am a girl



SHE SAYS
Jessica Napier
@MetroSheSays

As 2013 comes to a close, it's fun to look back at some of the memorable columns I've written over the course of the year. Back in June, I wrote a piece about swearing in public. I described how my boyfriend and I had been reprimanded by an

From the inbox

"I am saddened when I hear a young person, especially a young girl, making a public reference to parts of their body and their knowledge of sexual activity with obscenities."

Anonymous reader

overbearing parent at a neighbouring table after dropping a few expletives during a Sunday brunch.

I was hardly advocating for an uncivilized society full of foul-mouthed brutes, but the column definitely struck a nerve among our readers.

I received a few letters from

people who identified swearing in public as a generational problem. One gentleman wrote an email stating, "I am saddened when I hear a young person, especially a young girl, making a public reference to parts of their body and their knowledge of sexual activity with obscenities."

I understand the importance of good manners, but I take offence to this notion that I should suppress

any behaviour that is deemed 'unlady-like' according to a 1950s standard.



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The film reel of 2013: The good, the bad and the ugly

Year in review. The beginning of a new year, like the opening of a new film, holds so much promise... It's time for Metro to screen 2013's crop



**NED
EHRBAR**
Metro World News in Hollywood

It's time to bid farewell to 2013 with a look at the most disappointing films of the year.

Pacific Rim

Giant robots! Fighting giant sea monsters! Directed by Guillermo del Toro! This could've been so good, and obviously we thought it would be, but the results were just... not so much.

Only God Forgives

Maybe Nicholas Winding Refn was punishing people for liking his fantastic "Drive" too much, but this art-house meditation on masculinity, violence and retribution — we think? — was just a slog.

Star Trek Into Darkness

We might have been less disappointed in this long-awaited sequel if J.J. Abrams had just come out and said from the get-go that Benedict Cumberbatch was playing Khan. If only that were the only problem with it, though.

Jack the Giant Killer

Maybe it was foolish to expect Bryan Singer to do something cool and interesting with the old Jack and the Beanstalk fairy tale, but this one just fell flat.

Oldboy

Spike Lee's plodding, uninspired remake of Park Chan-wook's 2003 cult classic at least makes a strong case for renting the original. Some things don't translate well, apparently.

Lovelace

A lot of foreplay that led to not very much of anything else, this exploration of the woman behind Deep Throat held too much back.



Director Guillermo del Toro really dropped the ball on Pacific Rim — a movie that promised so much and delivered so little. CONTRIBUTED

Metro's picks

- 1 Gravity
- 2 Blue Jasmine
- 3 12 Years A Slave
- 4 Hunger Games
- 5 Dallas Buyers Club



We asked and you let us know that Gravity was your top movie pick for 2013. CONTRIBUTED

Reader's pick

What do you think? We recently polled Metro readers to see what film they considered to be the best of 2013. Gravity was the winner, hands down.

Enough Said

James Gandolfini's last leading film role, Julia Louis-Dreyfus' return to movies, another chance for Nicole Holofcener to examine adult relationships? This one had so much going for it. Too bad the end result is flat, uninspired and far too pleased with itself.

Metro pick

American Hustle



**IN
FOCUS**
Richard Crouse
scene@metronews.ca

American Hustle's story of flim flam men and women, the FBI and a real life sting known as Abscam has emerged as my favourite movie of 2013. It's an entertainingly audacious

movie that will doubtless be compared to The Wolf of Wall Street because of the similarity in tone and themes, but this time around director David O. Russell has almost out-Scorsese'd Martin Scorsese. Add to that unexpected and compelling performances from the a-list ensemble cast—Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner, Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence — and it adds up to the most fun I had at the movies this year.

Metro pick

Dallas Buyers Club

Dallas Buyers Club was the movie of 2013 for me. But it wasn't the power of its plot or its commentary on HIV ignorance in the 1980s that moved my soul. No. It was witnessing the transformation of Matthew McConaughey into an Oscar-worthy actor. To the role of Ron Woodroof — an

HIV-positive Texan rodeo rider searching for treatment — he wound up burning anger and desperation into a disturbingly emaciated frame. Watch. Then remind yourself this is the guy who brought us Dazed and Confused's Wooderson and the oft quoted line about high school girls: "I get older, they stay the same age." Lucky for us that Mr. McConaughey has matured into a fine thespian.

LIZ BROWN/METRO

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Who won the battle of the baby names?

Traditional vs plain old weird. Some of the most popular monikers of the year came, not surprisingly, from celebrities



IT'S ALL
RELATIVE
Kathy Buckworth
kathybuckworth.com

Every year, the most popular baby names list is announced, and I think most parents prefer not to see their child's name turn up there.

It might be because they want to "own" that name and be individual, or they are thinking about confusion in the classroom in later years. I personally know about 117 Jennifers, clearly a No. 1 name in the '70s.

While I didn't name my kids to stand out, I didn't specifically choose names I hoped would be super popu-

lar either.

I'm a Kathy; growing up in the '60s and '70s there were always more than a few of us, even if some of them spelled it incorrectly with a "C."

As for my husband, I think every second guy my age that I know has his name (Steve), including my own brother.

Steve has also been the name of choice for a monkey in both the movie Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs, as well as in the Spot the Dog books, and even the titular hedge in the movie Over the Hedge.

My kids giggle at the thought of a newborn baby named Steve. "This is my new baby, STEVE." (Come on, that's funny.)

The top names in Canada for 2013 this year are Emma and Carter, according to Canadian Living Magazine.

Parents who have chosen these names will be well advised to order labels with their last initial tacked on, speaking from experience.

I don't see any real sur-

prises in the list (see fact box). While we run across the occasional unusual name, Canadians are fairly traditionalist.

Celebrities are scorned when they use unusual names (Apple, Blue Ivy, and Moon Unit) and lauded when they go with traditional names.

Two of the most famous babies born this year were William and Catherine's Prince George (which makes Canadians giggle, particularly those in northern B.C.), and Kim and Kanye's new reality production, North.

I wish others had followed the pseudo-metaphor of the name and phrase North West.

Halle Berry couldn't have gone with either Straw or Blue?

It would have killed Toni Braxton to go with Hicks? (Only new moms will appreciate that one.)

For the record, my kids are Victoria, Alexander, Bridget and Nicholas. Not that Penny Buckworth wouldn't have been fun.

Top names of 2013

According to Canadian Living magazine, these were the top names for boys and girls this year.

Boys

1. Carter
2. Christopher
3. Hunter
4. Joseph
5. Joshua

Girls

1. Emma
2. Hailey
3. Isabella
4. Jada
5. Matilda



Kanye and Kim surprised the world when they named their baby girl North West. GETTY

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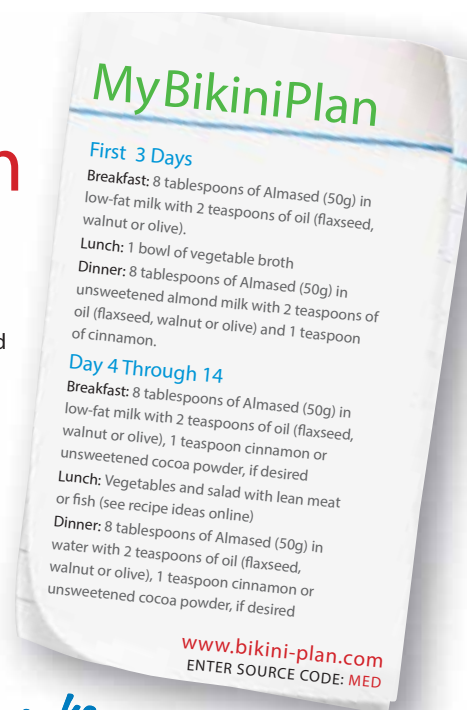
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HBO's Game belongs only on the Throne

TV. Whether you binge watched or faithfully tuned in, there were a number of great shows this year. Metro weighs in on what was tube-worthy in 2013

Alexandra Cavallo, our TV correspondent from south of the border, gives us her picks for the best shows on TV, however you may watch TV.

Game of Thrones

Game of Thrones had the best season ever. What other show has the balls to ruthlessly — and awesomely, creatively and bloodily — kill off multiple main characters like it ain't no thing? Game of Thrones reigns supreme. See what I did there?

House of Cards

Other than HBO (and FX and A&E and — well, damn, seems like television is killing it lately, huh?) Netflix is putting out some of the most exciting and game-changing programs. House of Cards — to put it simply

Metro's picks

- 1** Breaking Bad comes to an end
- 2** Toronto Mayor Rob Ford is lampooned on every major late night talk show and Saturday Night Live
- 3** The murder-filled Red Wedding episode of Game of Thrones shocks viewers not familiar with the book series.
- 4** Arrested Development returns to TV via Netflix
- 5** Netflix series House of Cards becomes the first web TV show to receive major Primetime Emmy Award nominations, and goes on to win in three categories.



The shocking Red Wedding episode of Game of Thrones made Metro's list of the best of 2013. HANDOUT

Finally, a healthy binge

You could say I'm always a little late to the party. Up until six months ago, I didn't have Netflix, I never watched TV online and I never thought I was missing out. That was until I was introduced to Breaking Bad. I now fully indulge in what is being called binge-tv watching. I have devoured entire series (Family Guy, The Boondocks, American Dad, Episodes, The Walking Dead, to name a few. Yes, a few), and have spent an unacceptable amount of time on my couch. And though I'm nostalgic for the days of looking forward to my favourite show every week, and being left hanging for an entire summer before my shows return, I embrace this new way of enjoying television, even if I'm a little late.

MIRIAM
OSBORNE/
METRO



— is utterly captivating, and this comes from a person, who, I admit it, doesn't even vote. Politics is not my thing. But this show has it all: intrigue, sex, violence, scandal and Kevin Spacey. Enough said.

Project Runway

Here's my shout-out to reality TV. I love reality it. I watch it all. Housewives, teen moms, geriatric moms, people who have sex with inanimate objects — I'll watch them all, as long as it's "real." But Project Runway (technically a reality competition show, which makes it higher brow) is legitimately a quality show. The contestants (for the most part) are actually astoundingly talented, the challenges are fresh and exciting, and there's still enough cat fighting and drama to sate my appetite

Final eight episodes



Breaking Bad: The final curtain

In mid 2013 the final eight episodes of the ultra-popular and critically acclaimed series Breaking Bad went on air. As usual Bryan Cranston and Aaron Paul turned in stellar performances and creator Vince Gilligan ensured the climactic episodes did not disappoint. We join the second half of the final season with Hank finally realizing that Walt is the infamous meth kingpin

Heisenberg.

This riveting show draws to a close with eight suspense-filled episodes. We see Jesse team up with Hank to catch Walt, Todd's ruthless relatives committing horrible deeds and Walter, in conflict with his family and on the run, tying up as many loose ends as he can. Viewers were rewarded for their loyalty with a brilliantly crafted and gradual ending to this Ned Flanders-turned-Scarface story. As the screen faded to the sound of Baby Blue I realized we may never see the likes of it again. Pure Genius. EOIN WELDON/METRO

for lowbrow reality crap.

Girls

How did nobody else even mention this show? I don't care what anybody says, Lena Dunham is a genius and remarkably likeable despite airing her flaws — both emotional and physical — for the whole world to gawk at. Sure, the second season didn't quite meet the very high bar that the debut season set — it was a little too dark, and sometimes depressing — but as a 20-something girl myself (29 still counts) I can totally relate to almost everything that is said and done on this

show. Don't judge me.

Nathan For You

Most people have probably never seen or even heard of this show. Get familiar, people, because Canadian comedian Nathan Fielder is one of the funniest dudes on the tube right now. This docu-reality comedy series basically features Fielder playing a deadpan, dead-eyed version of himself, using his "business background" to help out failing companies and individuals. Spoiler alert: He is not helpful. Trust me, you've got to watch it.

ALEXANDRA CAVALLO/MWN

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Metro's turn-up and tune-out in 2013



According to Metro readers, Miley Cyrus is the celebrity they would like to never hear from again!

GETTY IMAGES

Metro's picks

Metro's picks for top five songs

- 1. Get Lucky, by Daft Punk
- 2. Reflektor and Afterlife, by Arcade Fire
- 3. Black Skinhead, by Kanye West
- 4. Royals, by Lorde
- 5. Thrift Shop, by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis



No lines blurred in this selection

As a shameless Jay Z super fan, I want to say 2013's top song was Holy Grail featuring Justin Timberlake. But even I can't deny this year belonged to Blurred Lines by Robin Thicke featuring Pharrell Williams and T.I. A simplistic hook and its blend of R&B and pop helped the infectious Blurred Lines hold top spot on charts around the world. It also created its share of controversy (think music video with prancing topless supermodels and Thicke preemptively suing Marvin Gaye's family). Love it or hate it, at some point (maybe in a drunken stupor if you're a certain mayor) you likely caught yourself singing, "OK, now he was close, tried to domesticate ya..." IZABELA SZYDLO, METRO

Metro picks

Song of the Year: Royals by Lorde



SOUND CHECK
Alan Cross
scene@metronews.ca

Talk about a song with universal appeal! What began as a track marketed to the alternative set has become the biggest cross-format hit in years.

This is largely due to what was left out of Royals. It would have been so easy (and tempting!) to mess up the song by over-producing it. Instead, there's an elegant simplicity to everything: an understated rhythm track and the barest hint of a bass line. Lorde's vocals do the rest. The song doesn't even contain a bridge. This is brilliant songwriting, an excellent performance and perfect production, all wrapped in one great song.



Crossover appeal lands Lorde at the top of Alan Cross's list. HANDOUT

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The 2013 cyber heights of cyberspace

Metro's picks

1 Chris Hadfield's out-of-this-world version of Space Oddity inspired many. Kris Abel walks you through his blast off into the collective consciousness.

2 Norwegian comedy group Ylvis' video for What Does the Fox Say? was YouTube's top video of the year, and has even spawned an illustrated book.

3 Amanda Byrnes' 2013 tweets left many of us scratching out heads — and just shocked.

4 Felix Baumgartner's freefall from the edge of space.



5 Patrick Stewart's tweets left an impression on anyone within a half mile of Twitter this year. Read what we have to say about them on this page.



A Canadian star was born



MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
scene@metronews.ca

Chris Hadfield won the Internet this year with a viral hit that was anything but accidental. He evoked the beauty of our world by sharing how difficult it was to leave its orbital view. These are complex emotions that he somehow captured with an iPad recording of himself singing David Bowie's Space Oddity. His Space Station video lessons and tweeted photos revealed a master communicator who understands the web better than anyone. Through him we have an extraordinary connection to space exploration, but also an example of how a cynical web culture can embrace values that are sophisticated and sincere.

Another kind of fame

Getting high off Patrick's personality

Making memes from Patrick Stewart's many starring movie roles is nothing new for those who lurk the intertubes. But when his fiancé posted a video of an allegedly stoned Stewart giving her acting lessons on the art of the quadruple take, the Internet's collective head caught a contact high. The powerful hit lasted throughout the year as Reddit and its kind obsessed over all things Stewart. From the serious (Stewart speaking about his own experiences with domestic violence) to the silly (him climbing into a bathtub dressed as a lobster), the former captain of the Star Trek Enterprise was sailing nothing but the good ship Awesome in 2013. **METRO**



Patrick Stewart, here with Ian McKellen, showed us a side of him we'd never seen before.

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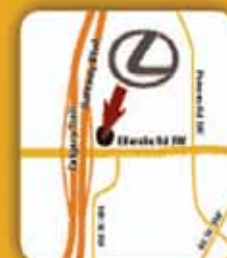
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Top headlines of Hollywood's 2013

They did what? It was a shock-and-awe year in celeb gossip, and Metro's editors never hesitated to chime in on the tabloid chatter

Pop culture gets a bad rap, according to Metro's gossip editor, Dorothy Robinson. Sure, it's lowbrow (especially when Miley Cyrus decides to take her clothes off with no deference to taste or talent) and it births fame-hungry monsters (Kimye, you are a creation even Walter Winchell couldn't dream up). Yet, the hijinks and disasters of people who fly so very high take us away from the humdrum of everyday life.

Keeping up with Miley is a nice distraction from the fact that the cable bill is due. Watching Beyonce at the Super Bowl is a reminder of what is humanly possible if you have drive, talent and a whole lot of luck. And witnessing the untimely deaths of two stars reminds us that even our little lives are ones worth living. In fact, maybe we're the lucky ones, blessed to be outside looking in — instead of the other way around.

Here is what some of our editors had to say about the year in gossip:

"I didn't put the Royal Baby on my list because I thought that fell under news. Come on: Kate Middleton should NEVER be



Love them or hate them, it was hard to get off the blinged-out, baby-making bus that was Kimye this year.

GETTY IMAGES



Who wasn't confused by this Canadian coupling? GETTY IMAGES

on the same list as Miley or Kim Kardashian. And although Avril Lavigne marrying Chad Kroeger wasn't earth-shaking, it was so delightfully weird that I thought it

Metro's picks

1 Miley Cyrus ditches her clean-cut image by twerking at the MTV awards, smoking a joint on air at the MTV Europe Awards, and working with photographer Terry Richards — and those are just some of her antics.

2 Amanda Bynes — see Liz Beddall's story to your right.

3 Kanye West and Kim Kardashian brought forth a baby and decided it would be

fun to name her North.

4 Justin Beiber wreaked havoc in his neighbourhood with his driving, peed in a bucket, lost his monkey, and then had a drama-filled South American tour before heading to Australia for more of the same.

5 Angelina Jolie surprised the world by announcing she underwent a double mastectomy.

deserved a mention."

DOROTHY ROBINSON

"I, for one, definitely had Beyonce winning the Super Bowl on my list. Nothing can stop

her, not even a blackout. I don't even remember who actually played. All I remember is the Destiny's Child reunion and Beyonce's black lace body suit. She wins." EMILY LAURENCE

Amanda on our minds

Reading between the Bynes

While it seems 2013 was the year of the squeaky-clean-songstress-turned-train-wreck-tabloid-queen, there was arguably no one who was featured as consistently on Metro's Dish page as former WB sweetheart Amanda Bynes.

Multiple brushes with the law, airborne bongos, drive-way fires, neon wigs and one trainwreck of a Twitter feed meant that Bynes all too often became our feature focus.

Having recently received treatment for mental illness, we hope 2014 brings Amanda some peace, health and much-needed time away from the tabloids.

LIZ BEDDALL/METRO



Amanda Bynes GETTY IMAGES

Dorothy Robinson's picks

1 Miley Cyrus' crazy year.

2 The evolution of Kimye (and the birth of baby North West).

3 Beyonce wins the Super Bowl.

4 Cory Monteith overdosing.

5 Avril Lavigne marrying Chad Kroeger.

"I can't find any evidence supporting the theory that Kanye has a sense of humor; I fear he is gravely serious. We mere mortals just do not understand him." T. MICHELLE MURPHY

I guess unlike other calculated 'Look at me! I'm no longer a Disney pop princess! I'm now a woman!' coming-out moments (see: Britney in the red leather body suit; Christina's suggestive Genie in a Bottle), Miley's coming out seems raw and unpolished. She's going

more for shock value than sex appeal. Which, honestly, is slightly refreshing. Just put the tongue away, girlfriend."

DOROTHY ROBINSON

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The five worst fitness trends of 2013 we hope don't return

Year-end review.

Workouts can get boring from time to time but these ideas on how to switch things up missed the mark this year.

VAWN
HIMMELSBACH
life@metronews.ca

It's not a bad idea to switch up your workout routine every now and then to challenge your muscles and stay motivated. But in the quest for new ways to do old exercises, some trends might be a tad questionable.



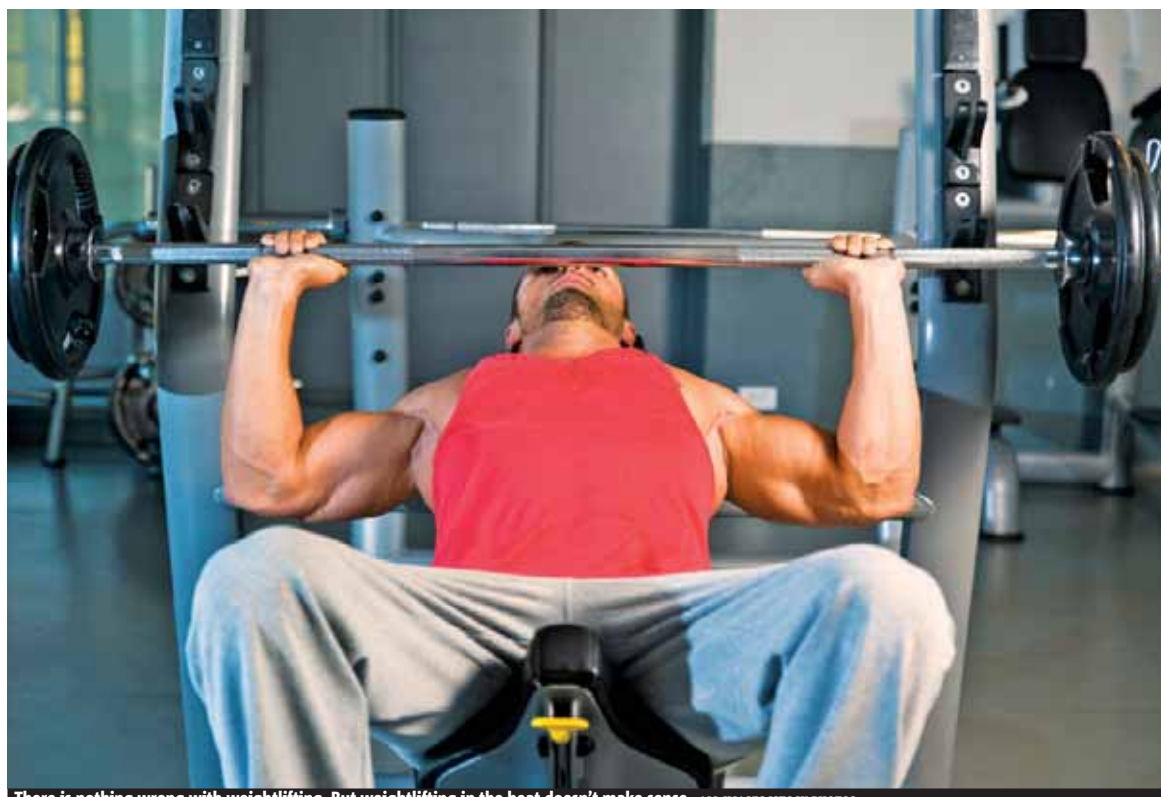
Backwards is just backwards.

Backwards running

Sure, running can get monotonous, but is running backwards the answer? There's a reason why people are doing it: According to a study by the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health, running backwards uses 30 per cent more energy than moving forward at the same speed. And, supposedly, it's easier on your knees. But let's face it; running backwards is an accident waiting to happen since — if it's not obvious — you can't see where you're going. Not to mention it looks ridiculous.

Boutique/hybrid yoga

If you're into yoga, there are a variety of styles to suit your personality, from ashtanga to moksha to yin. But now, you can mix those warrior poses with ... hula-hoops, trampolines and martial-arts kicks. Or do yoga on a paddleboard, to disco music or even with your dog (doga). But yoga isn't about total body sculpting or getting a cardio workout — it's about quieting your mind. And it's hard to quiet your mind while doing disco moves in tree posture.



There is nothing wrong with weightlifting. But weightlifting in the heat doesn't make sense. ALL IMAGES ISTOCK PHOTOS

Extreme HIIT ... for average Joes

High-intensity interval training (or HIIT) has many benefits: Bursts of vigorous exercise (think squats and burpees) followed by brief rest periods can burn calories — fast. That's why we've seen the rise of workouts like CrossFit, and the Insanity and P90X DVD series. But along with the increase in popularity of these types of workouts has come an increase in injury, from slipped disks to torn rotator cuffs. According to a recent study published by The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, 16 per cent of CrossFit participants quit the program due to overuse or injury. At least it's good news for orthopedic surgeons.

Themed runs (that involve barbed wire)

Working out should be fun, and hey, who wouldn't be motivated to run faster when being chased by zombies? While themed workouts from Tough Mudder to colour runs (running through clouds of coloured cornstarch) can be motivating or push you

to challenge your endurance, any athletic endeavor that involves wading through ice water under barbed wire or being zapped by live wires is questionable. Perhaps next we'll start seeing live wires attached to treadmills so you'll get zapped if you're not running fast enough.

Hot weightlifting

Traditional weightlifting remains one of the best ways to build muscle. But one of the latest fads takes weightlifting to a new level — pumping iron in the heat. The concept behind Bikram yoga (where the temperature in the room is cranked to 40.6 C with a humidity of 40 per cent) is now being applied to everything from barre to spinning and weightlifting classes. But according to a recent study by the American Council on Exercise, turning up the heat doesn't actually burn extra calories. You just think you are, all the while risking dehydration and even heat stroke. If you like the heat, best to stick to Bikram.



Run from this trend.

Styles with staying power

This year saw plenty of questionable clothing choices sashay down the streets, but among them were a few wardrobe wins that we guarantee won't be disappearing once the winter flurries die down.

LIZ BEDDALL
Metro World News

Embellished collars



Joe Fresh embellished collar silk shirt, \$59
joefresh.com

LOFT Gilded-lace-yoke sleeveless dress, \$89.50
loft.com

Box clutches



GUESS black- and gold-tone Minaudiere, \$50
guess.ca

Swarovski Star Evening Bag in silver, \$650
swarovski.com

Animal prints



H&M Ballet pumps, \$29.95
hm.com

Banana Republic leopard-jacquard fit and flare dress, \$160, bananarepublic.ca

Rose gold



Hillberg & Berk gemstone bracelet, \$240
hillbergandberk.com



Attitude Rosegold pointy toed flat, \$59.99
sears.ca



Michael Kors watch, \$235
watchit.ca

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I'll take a cold cerveza with that



Mexican has gone beyond the smothered-in-cheese dishes. ISTOCK

Year of Mexican food. You've been fooled long enough with cheesy dishes and store-bought salsa. Authentic Mexican is taking over — olé!



NUTRI-BITES
Theresa Albert
DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

Remember when Mexican food meant cookie cutter platters of oddly coloured white rice with a bunch of stuff covered in cheese?

You may have gotten a bowl of pre-fab corn chips and bottled salsa instead of bread as an appetizer.

Luckily, 2013 saw the rise of true Mexican food. It showed up everywhere, from the very hip food truck culture running away with the foodie heart to the top end of

just about every urban menu.

Some of the foods that we can't get enough include pulled pork, fish tacos and burritos. And you really haven't lived unless you've found churros with the caramel-like dulce de leche sauce. (Don't forget the side of tequila, which was the beverage of 2013.)

Real Mexican food is wholesome, and it varies across the country from fish-based seaside to tropical fruit interiors, but they all have three things in common: corn, chili peppers and beans. The Europeans added pork, chicken and tomatoes and North Americans topped it all off with some flair.

Taco night is no longer spice from a box mixed with ground beef and corn shells, although, they are certainly retro-welcome. Think broader.

Chicken

Toss a chicken in the slow cooker with one of the many creative jars of salsa on the

market and cook all day. Pull chicken from the bones and serve with tostadas, artisan corn and wheat tortillas plus toppings like frozen corn simply roasted on a cookie sheet in the oven.

Cole Slaw

Think about a grated cole slaw mix instead of shredded lettuce. Top with cocoa nibs, any manner of chopped chilies and any combo of fresh herbs. Serve with fresh lime juice and soda water with muddled mint (go ahead add some tequila!)

Pulled Pork

Pulled pork couldn't be easier. The low and slow oven versions create the best melt in your mouth recipes. Sauce options run the gamut from barbecue sauce to the chocolate and chili based mole sauce. This one pot wonder is the best crowd pleaser to come out of this Mexican trend. Pork shoulder or arm

is an affordable (if fatty) cut that can't be ruined as long as you keep the oven temperature below 300 and the time at least an hour per pound.

Churro Dip

Since churros are hard to find, must be fresh and deep frying is a pain (not to mention crazy unhealthy!)

Why not go with the classic churro dip: dulce de leche and forgo the donut? This sweet milk caramel sauce can be now purchased jarred but the quickie cheater recipe using only sweetened, condensed milk is ridiculously easy. Use it to drizzle onto vanilla pudding, fresh fruit or chocolate cookies and you are right on the Mexican trend. Which will, by the way, continue for a few more years... **THERESA ALBERT IS A FOOD COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AND TORONTO PERSONAL NUTRITIONIST. SHE IS @THERESAALBERT ON TWITTER AND FOUND DAILY AT WWW.MYFRIENDINFOOD.COM**

Wine of the Year

2011 Vintage Port



LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

"I'm loading up on 2011 Vintage Port," says Peter Rockwell, Metro's expert for all things liquid. "Considered one of the best years in decades; all the big houses released a version this year. Dow's 2011 (\$79.49) is spectacular; and will age well into 2063."



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Design darlings of 2013

Style gurus Steven Sabados and Chris Hyndman take a look back at the top home-decor trends of the past year, and find the standout themes included artful lighting, lived-in linen, warm gold and brass accents, and the rustic look of unfinished wood. For more chic decor ideas, watch Steven & Chris weekdays at 2 p.m. on CBC.



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Natural wood was the material of choice for many this year, say Steven and Chris. Crate and Barrel's Big Sur Natural collection, which includes dining tables, benches and a sideboard, has a polished wax finish and emphasizes the innate character of the wood. For more details, see crateandbarrel.com. COURTESY CRATEANDBARREL.COM

Emerald Green

Emerald green, Pantone's 2013 colour of the year, was eagerly and enthusiastically embraced by designers and consumers. From throw cushions to sofas and wall treatments, emerald green was undoubtedly this year's "it" colour. Emerald green is vibrant, radiant and lush and it's not surprising that its popularity also sparked a renewed interest in all things glam.

Gold and brass

This was the year many vintage favourites experienced a major comeback. Gold and brass, reminiscent of decades past, became a leading trend and surfaced anywhere from hardware finishes to decor accessories.

Gold flatware appeared on tabletops. Chrome no longer dominated kitchen and bathroom fixtures as gold and brass taps offered a warm metallic glow in the room. Brass and gold decor accents became increasingly sought after this year as the idea of mixing metallics grew in popularity.

You don't need to discard your existing finishes to incorporate brass and gold into your home decor, and that's a key factor in the success of this design trend.

Natural wood

Natural wood was the material of choice for many this year. Raw wood tables with no varnish or treatments went from being showroom darlings to standard household decor.

The versatility and durabil-

ity of raw wood coupled with its natural patina over time make it a sensible and stylish solution for family living. The rustic look of natural unfinished wood has also been juxtaposed with cooler elements like chrome and glass in more formal areas of the home.

Lighting as art

Lighting as a form of artwork became a popular concept this year. Form reigned over function for most of this year's most desired light fixtures. In 2013, lighting made a statement in the room instead of just lighting it up. Over-scale light fixtures were also a big part of this trend. Chandeliers, pendants, sconces, table lamps and floor lamps have become key extensions of a room's style and personality.

The lived-in look

In 2013, comfort was king with a big focus on natural fibres such as linen. The relaxed lived-in look was seen in many upholstered decor pieces such as casual wingback chairs and slipcovered sofas. Even drapery has moved away from traditional silk textiles to the more casual elegance of linen. The driving force of this trend is lifestyle and the move away from traditional formal choices to more liveable no-fuss options.



Lived-in comfort: Crate and Barrel's Jeremiah Jute Back Rocker features Belgian linen. See crateandbarrel.com for details.

Left, hand-shaped brass Loki Bowl, \$94, crateandbarrel.com.

Emerald, which was Pantone's 2013 colour of the year, showed up in a wide range of decor products including this Mohair Fringe Throw, \$199, from zarahome.com.

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Sports

Edmonton sports fans continue to witness the Oilers failing to meet their potential, and an Eskimos squad in need of a rebuild.



The Oilers' David Perron has been one of the bright spots on a disappointing team that will look to turn things around in the new year. DEREK LEUNG/GETTY IMAGES

Oilers keep drilling for playoff formula



THE HOCKEY NEWS
Ryan Kennedy
edmonton@metronews.ca

'Twas the year of the broken record for Edmonton, where the Oilers are once again swooning — and not because of the gifts under the tree.

As has been the trend the past couple of seasons, the Oilers are brimming with potential, but ultimately weighed down by an incomplete lineup marred by obvious holes.

That the Oilers are dead-last in the division is a bit of a surprise, but dead-last in the West is unforgivable.

Since it is the holiday season, however, let's take a look at both the good and bad of Edmonton's campaign so far.

Best Move: Bringing in

goaltender Ilya Bryzgalov.

That sentence hasn't been uttered since the Russian netminder left Anaheim for Phoenix via waivers in late 2007, but the famously spacey Bryzgalov has looked good in spurts and has saved the Oilers from a steady diet of the embattled Devan Dubnyk.

Worst Move: Trading Ladislav Smid. A defensive-minded blue-liner with a lot of NHL experience, Smid was steady for Edmonton over the years and on a good team, would be

an excellent second-pairing D-man.

Instead of surrounding him with more talent, GM Craig MacTavish shipped Smid to rival Calgary for forward Roman Horak, with prospect goalies also being exchanged.

MacTavish claimed the trade freed up cap space in order to get Bryzgalov, but surely a forward could have been sacrificed instead.

The Oilers need more NHL defencemen, not less of them.

Best Player: David Perron.

Finding the bright side

"That the Oilers are dead-last in the division is a bit of a surprise, but dead-last in the West is unforgivable. Since it is the holiday season, however, let's take a look at both the good and bad of Edmonton's campaign so far."

Most-searched teams

Leafs Nation rules the Google roost

Not even the heartbreak of a Game 7 meltdown and a dispiriting 5-4 overtime loss during last season's playoffs appears to have deterred Maple Leafs fans from keeping tabs on their team.

At least not according to Google Canada's 2013 Zeitgeist report, which tracks trending search terms.

The Montreal Canadiens came in second, followed by the Ottawa Senators, the Edmonton Oilers and the Calgary Flames.

"We're a hockey-obsessed nation and the data totally backs it up," said Aaron Brindle of Google Canada.

Here are the teams that rounded out the rest of the top 10 most searched:

1. Toronto Maple Leafs
2. Montreal Canadiens
3. Ottawa Senators
4. Edmonton Oilers
5. Calgary Flames
6. Vancouver Canucks
7. Winnipeg Jets
8. Saskatchewan Roughriders
9. Toronto Raptors
10. Hamilton Tiger-Cats

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The past year has produced several highs and many lows for Canadian teams and athletes. The following storylines grabbed our attention above all the others.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

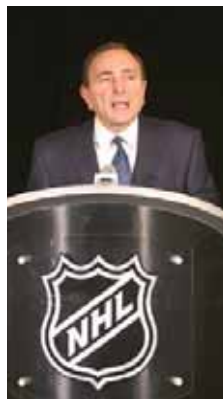
The end of the NHL lockout

Hockey fans rejoiced when the NHL and the NHL Players' Association reached a tentative deal to end the lockout in the early hours of Jan. 6.

The agreement was ratified by the board of governors three days later.

Just over five months later, the Chicago Blackhawks won their second Stanley Cup in four years.

Then in November, the league signed a massive new television deal with Rogers Communications worth \$5.2 billion over 12 years.



NHL commissioner Gary Bettman apologized for the tardy start to the season. GETTY IMAGES

A season of disappointment

The Toronto Blue Jays came into 2013 as World Series favourites after a blockbuster off-season that included a 12-player megadeal with the Florida Marlins and the acquisition of reigning National League Cy Young winner R.A. Dickey.

But with the city buzzing at the thought of meaningful September baseball for the first time since the team's championship years in 1992 and 1993, the campaign was bust from the start.



Brett Lawrie TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Raonic's rise

Tennis star Milos Raonic became the first Canadian to crack the ATP top-10 list.

The Thornhill, Ont., player made the Rogers Cup final in Montreal and was also instrumental in leading Canada to the Davis Cup semifinals.

Also making big gains on the court in 2013 were Vancouver's Vasek Pospisil and Montreal's Eugenie Bouchard, who both shot up the rankings.



Milos Raonic GETTY IMAGES

CFL double for Cornish

Calgary Stampeders running back Jon Cornish became the first Canadian in 35 years to win the CFL's most outstanding player award.

Cornish, who was also named the league's top Canadian for the second straight year, is the first Canuck to be named CFL MVP since Ottawa Rough Riders tight end Tony Gabriel in 1978.

Cornish finished the 2013 season with 1,813 yards rushing and 12 touchdowns.

Jon Cornish went on to win the 2013 Lou Marsh award as Canada's top athlete. THE CANADIAN PRESS



The top

8

sports stories of the year

Green crush

The Saskatchewan Roughriders became the third straight Grey Cup host to win the trophy, defeating the Hamilton Tiger-Cats 45-23 on Nov. 24.

The Riders won the 101st edition of the CFL championship in front of their rabid fans at Mosaic Stadium in Regina, with Kory Sheets rushing for a Grey Cup-record 197 yards and two touchdowns to help his team to just its fourth title.

"The one thing that led us to a dominant performance was that the fans were unreal," said Riders coach Corey Chamblin. "The whole (stadium) was green."



The Roughriders won the Grey Cup in Rider Nation. GETTY IMAGES

GSP steps away

UFC welterweight champion Georges St-Pierre successfully defended his title twice in 2013.

But after a bruising and controversial split-decision victory over Johnny Hendricks on Nov. 16, the Montreal fighter hinted at retirement in a cryptic post-fight interview in the cage that included a reference to unexplained personal issues and his need to step away from the sport.

Then, on Dec. 13, St-Pierre vacated his title and announced an indefinite hiatus from the Octagon, citing the pressures of being champion.

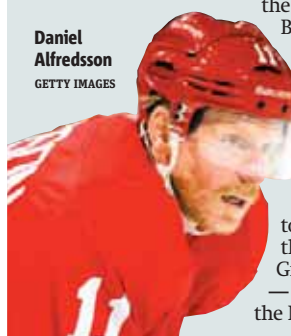


Georges St-Pierre THE CANADIAN PRESS

A trio of hockey stunners

- The Toronto Maple Leafs made the playoffs for the first time since 2004 and looked set to advance to the second round when the wheels fell off in spectacular fashion. Toronto led Boston 4-1 with just over 11 minutes to go in the third period of Game 7. The Bruins won 5-4 in OT.

Daniel Alfredsson
GETTY IMAGES



- Ottawa's beloved captain Daniel Alfredsson bolted from the Senators after 17 seasons to sign with the Detroit Red Wings.

- The Vancouver Canucks' goalie soap opera took an unexpected turn at the NHL draft when GM Mike Gillis traded Cory Schneider — not Roberto Luongo — to the New Jersey Devils.



Anthony Bennett is greeted by NBA commissioner David Stern upon being drafted. GETTY IMAGES

Canadian hoops history

Anthony Bennett shocked many observers on June 27 when he became the first-ever Canadian to go No. 1 at the NBA draft, selected by the Cleveland Cavaliers.

"I'm just as surprised as everybody else," the Brampton, Ont., native said.

Meanwhile, Vaughan, Ont.'s Andrew Wiggins was named the top high school player in the U.S.

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Answer to ending Jays' drought? It's Pat!



DAVE
LANGFORD
Metro reporter

There is a wonderful piece of trivia surrounding legendary Blue Jays general manager Pat Gillick, and it goes like this.

After leading the Blue Jays to two World Series titles (1992, '93) and five division titles (1985, '89, '91, '92, '93),

Gillick left the team in 1994. And the Jays have not made the playoffs since.

In 1995, Gillick joined Baltimore as general manager and the Orioles made the playoffs in 1996 and '97. He left the team after his three-year contract ended.

The Orioles then went on a streak of 14 losing seasons before finally making the

playoffs once in 2012.

Next, Gillick took his genius to Seattle where the Mariners made the playoffs in 2000 and 2001, the only time in their history they made the post-season in back-to-back seasons.

He left the team in 2003. And, yes, the Mariners have not made the playoffs since.

His next stop was Phila-

delphia where, as general manager, he led the Phillies to his third World Series championship. Now retired as GM, he continues to work for the Phillies as a senior advisor.

Meanwhile, the three teams he left behind have a grand total of one playoff appearance in 44 seasons.

And with the Blue Jays

currently priding themselves on promotions such as Flash-back Fridays, they need to bring back the most important person in their 36-year history — Lawrence Patrick David Gillick.

God knows they've tried everything else.

The team has just come off the most anticipated season since it last made

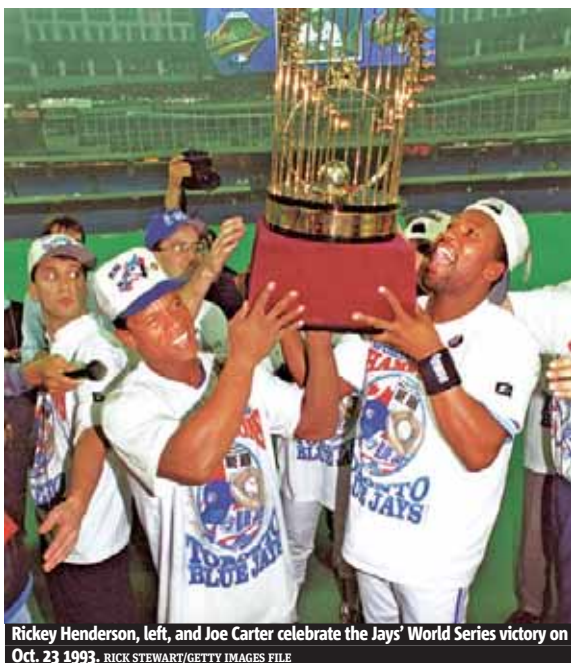
The Jays' leaders in 2013

Wins: R.A. Dickey, 14
Strikeouts: R.A. Dickey, 177
Saves: Casey Janssen, 34
Batting average: Adam Lind, .288
Homers: Edwin Encarnacion, 36
RBI's: Encarnacion, 104
Hits: Encarnacion, 144



The Blue Jays and starting pitcher R.A. Dickey crumbled under the World Series-sized expectations in Toronto in 2013.

HANNAH FOSLIEN/GETTY IMAGES



Rickey Henderson, left, and Joe Carter celebrate the Jays' World Series victory on Oct. 23 1993. RICK STEWART/GETTY IMAGES FILE

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the playoffs — and won the World Series — 20 years ago.

But the much-hyped 2013 was a disaster in every way.

It started with Opening Day and never let up.

April 2 was the day a truly horrendous fielding catcher with some admitted pop in his bat talked manager John Gibbons and general manager Alex Anthopoulos into letting him catch a Cy Young-winning knuckleball pitcher the Jays had acquired in the off-season.

Before a crowd of 48,847 at the Rogers Centre, catcher J.P. Arencibia allowed three passed balls — should have been four but a wonky scorer decision saved him — and the Blue Jays, with R.A. Dickey on the mound, lost 4-1 to the Cleveland Indians.

Arencibia never caught Dickey again and batted .194 on the season in which he miraculously was allowed to have 474 at bats.

Yes, there were pitching challenges and injuries all season long, with starters in and out of the lineup, and the Shuffle Off to Buffalo theme song was the team's No. 1 hit.

But the tedious season in which the Jays finished last in the five-team division was essentially lost that day in April.

The only way to turn the franchise around is to bring back the Blue Jay legend, Pat Gillick. Even at the age of 76.

CFL. Storied Blue Bombers, Eskimos could be on precipice of becoming irrelevant



The Eskimos hope their fortunes turn under new head coach Chris Jones. THE CANADIAN PRESS

It's renovation time for two of the CFL's once-mighty franchises, and this time they better make it right.

Both the Edmonton Eskimos and Winnipeg Blue Bombers are in rebuilding mode, after a pair of ugly 2013 campaigns that left fans shaking their heads in both towns.

"What went wrong? I have no answer for that," veteran Eskimos defensive back T. J. Hill said as his season ended.

The mood was as sombre in the Bombers locker-room

as players looked back on what might have been.

"It would be a sad thing if I left Winnipeg with this taste in my mouth," said Terrence Edwards, leader of the Bombers' receiving corps, who knows he has few seasons left.

Edmonton and Winnipeg have a lot in common.

Other CFL teams may struggle to fill seats, but not the Bombers or Eskimos. They have loyal fans, although lately they haven't had much to cheer about

Close to worst

In 2013, the Eskimos finished 4-14, their worst since the league went to 18 games, and the Bombers fell into the CFL cellar at 3-15, tying their worst ever 18-game season.

and there is always a chance their patience will finally run out.

Both are community-owned teams and both fin-

ished their 2013 seasons by sacking their coaches.

For the Bombers, it was two coaches in two years, with Paul LaPolice getting the hook mid-2012 when Tim Burke took over. Kavis Reed at least had three seasons in Edmonton.

Both teams also have had a bit of an off-field circus going in their management offices in recent years that have kept negative headlines before local fans.

But above all, perhaps, both teams also have a long

history of winning that makes it even tougher to swallow defeat.

The Eskimos can claim to be the most successful franchise of the modern era, with 13 Grey Cup wins starting in 1954 and five in a row between 1978 and 1982. Their most recent was in 2005.

The Bombers are no slouches, with a league-leading 24 appearances at the Grey Cup and 10 wins. But their last was in 1990, when they beat Edmonton.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Horoscopes

Aries

March 21 - April 20

You are on the threshold of a spectacular breakthrough. Which only goes to show that when you focus on a goal and follow up on it consistently, you can be a success. But don't get too full of yourself.

Taurus

April 21 - May 21

You need a change of direction and the planets will see that you get it. But don't worry. You will like what the next few weeks bring your way very much indeed.

Gemini

May 22 - June 21

You are who you are for a reason. If you stop wasting time fantasizing about who you would like to be and focus on doing a better job of who you are, you will soon be both successful and happy.

Cancer

June 22 - July 23

Your problems are not as bad as you think, so quit worrying. Cosmic activity in your opposite sign of Capricorn will bring relationship matters to a head over the weeks, but there is no need to panic. You'll survive.

Leo

July 24 - Aug. 23

You may be tempted to change something that has worked for years, but is that a good idea? There is every possibility that you will go too far and change things in a revolutionary rather than an evolutionary way.

Virgo

Aug. 24 - Sept. 23

Play to your strengths and don't let what others are doing affect you in any way. There are some things you do better than most and those are the things you should be focusing on.

Libra

Sept. 24 - Oct. 23

If you have been taking a loved one for granted, this could be a tricky day. Somehow you need to convince them that your feelings are still the same but it will take more than just words.

Scorpio

Oct. 24 - Nov. 22

Something important is about to happen and chances are you will enjoy it. Most likely it will have something to do with your social life, so get out into the world and smile big!

Sagittarius

Nov. 23 - Dec. 21

You may come into money over the next few days but it would be wrong to count on it to get you out of trouble. The only way you are going to improve your financial situation is to cut back on your commitments.

Capricorn

Dec. 22 - Jan. 20

As cosmic activity in your sign reaches a peak over the new year period, you'll have to deal with situations that in the past you've tried to avoid. The good news is solutions can be found, but you've got to act now.

Aquarius

Jan. 21 - Feb. 19

If your present approach to a problem is not working then clearly you need to tackle it from a different angle. Some people say you're too inflexible, too set in your ways to change. Prove them wrong.

Pisces

Feb. 20 - March 20

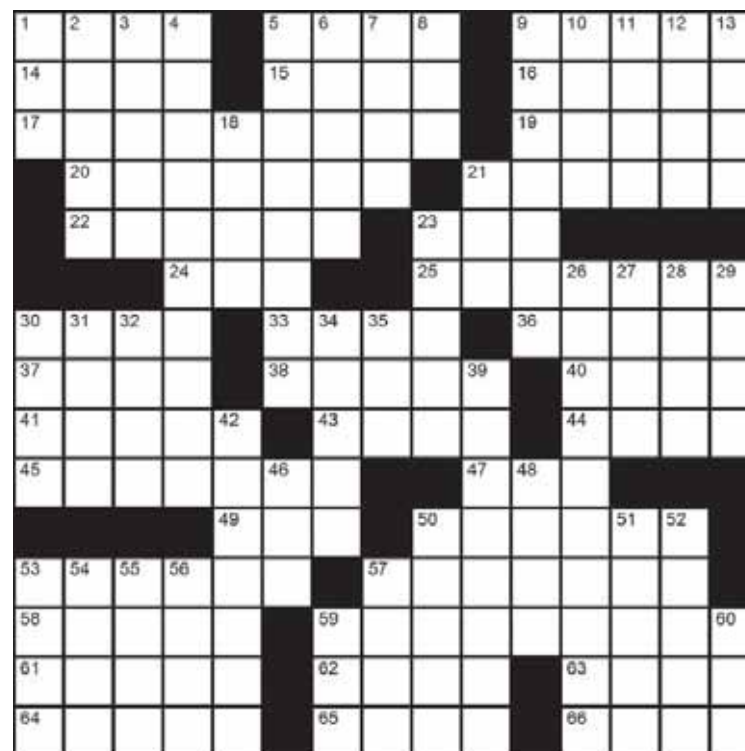
Pay attention to what loved ones tell you over the next 24 hours because they can see something that you missed. If you listen to what they say and act on their advice, it could save you trouble. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

Across

- Pasta, e.g.
- 17th Greek letters
- Mother-of-pearl
- code
- Nobleman
- Once more
- December 26th significance: 2 wds.
- Rene of movies
- Be drifting alone at sea ...but suddenly become joyful!: 2 wds.
- Slightly adjusts
- Accompaniment
- Musical fifth note, variantly
- Exclaimed "That hurts!", say
- Shopping: Door- special
- George Michael's '80s group!
- Architect Mr. Saarinen
- Finland's longest river
- Rush
- Pilotless aircraft
- Gift Tag: To and

- Nimbi
- Prince of Wales' motto, Ich __ (I Serve)
- Dick Tracy's beloved, __ Trueheart
- '50s TV series about a Quebec family, "La famille __"
- Best, __-rated
- Fee-fi-fo-__
- North or South, in The States



- Neil Young song: 2 wds.
- Subscriber's extension
- Wickerworker's willow
- Traditional pudding of Newfoundland: 2 wds.

- Billy Bob Thornton flick, "The Man Who __ There" (2001)
- 'Myth' suffix
- National Velvet author Ms. Bagnold
- Tiffs
- Foundation
- Lines of travel, for

short

Down

- Taxi
- Sprang up
- T. __ (Some dinosaurs)
- __, Quebec (Former PM Brian Mulro-

- ney's birthplace)
- Viewed as
- "In case you __ noticed..."
- Toward the mouth
- Slick
- Arctic whale having a spiral tusk
- Chill

- House, in Havana
- Board game
- Biblical grandson
- Sugar substitute, Sweet'
- Maple Leafs, on scoreboards
- Elegant biscuit
- Ski slope surface sometimes: 2 wds.
- Contract
- God of love in Greek mythology
- Sleep stages, commonly
- Gift
- Transport stuff
- Prefix to 'phobia' (Fear of heights)
- Canadian fashion designer Mr. Moralioglu
- French queen's mate
- Mire
- Attempts
- Amusing
- dokey
- Manet painting contemporary
- Razz
- 1966 Michael Caine film
- Awesomenesses!
- Office request [acronym]
- Marge's daughter
- Prince Michael of (Queen Elizabeth's cousin)
- Costa
- Taradiddle
- Hose-using rescue units, for short

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN

Dec. 24th's Crossword

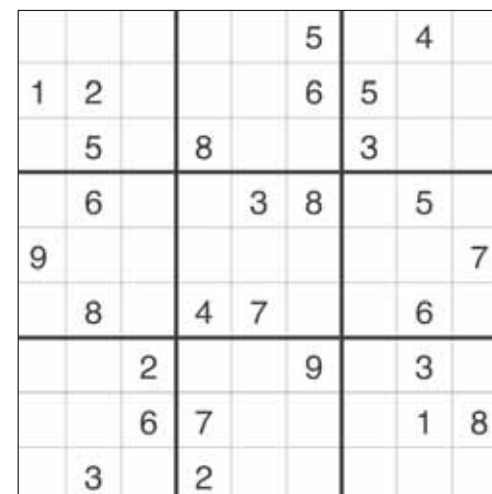


Sudoku

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Dec. 24's Sudoku



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